

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**ROGERS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE ARKANSAS GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 10, 2013) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Maggie Montoya of Rogers High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Montoya is the first Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Rogers High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the racecourse, distinguishes Montoya as Arkansas's best high school girls cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Montoya joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-00, 2000-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-4 senior raced to the Class 7A individual state title this past season with a time of 18:17.7, leading the Mounties to a third-place finish as a team. The 2010-11 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year and 2011-12 Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Montoya was the fastest Arkansas competitor at the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional championships, crossing the line in 17:40 to take 13th place.

Montoya has maintained a 3.89 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has volunteered locally as a bible camp leader and on behalf of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"There is no other runner in the state who even comes close to Maggie Montoya," said Michelle Fyfe, head coach at Fayetteville High. "In my 20 years of coaching, I have seen many great runners, but few are as good off the course as they are on it. Montoya is both."

Montoya has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at Baylor University beginning this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Montoya joins Gatorade Arkansas Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Valerie Reina (2010-11, Har-Ber High School), Erika Setzler (2009-10, Conway), and Grace Heymsfield (2008-09 & 2007-08, Elkins) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com.

###